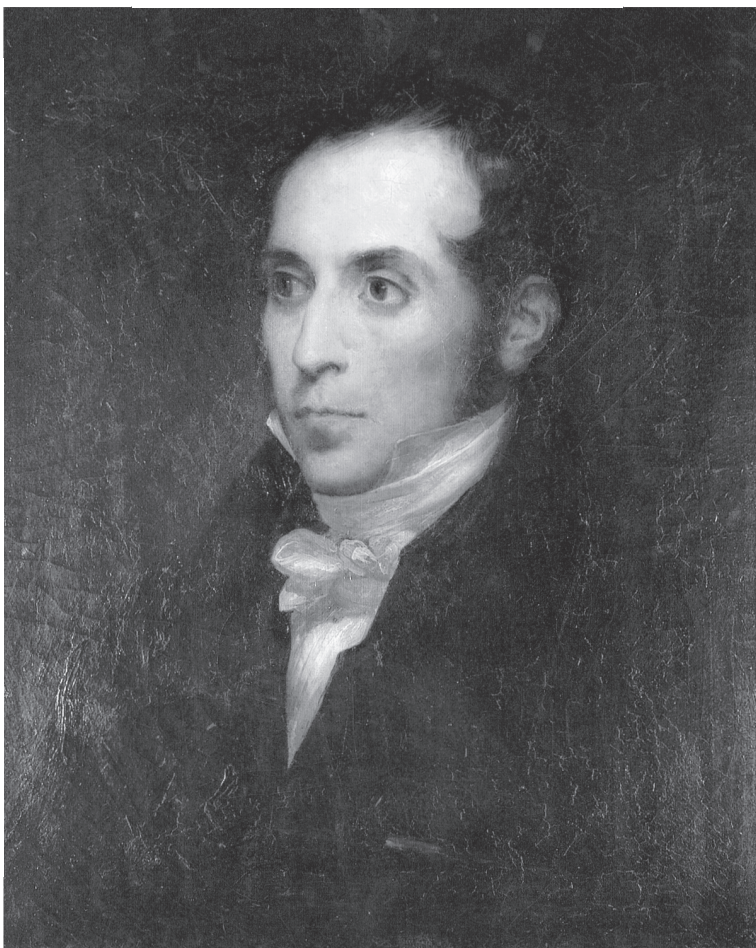


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THE HISTORY  
OF THE ORIGINS  
OF REPRESENTATIVE  
GOVERNMENT  
IN EUROPE

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FRANÇOIS GUIZOT

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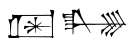
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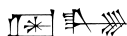
TRANSLATED BY ANDREW R. SCOBLE

INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY AURELIAN CRAIUTU



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*The right to power is always  
derived from reason, never from will.  
The legitimacy of power rests in  
the conformity of its laws to  
eternal reason.*

GUIZOT

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# INTRODUCTION TO THE LIBERTY FUND EDITION

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“I do not think I have ever met, in all my life, a Frenchman who was a liberal,” the literary critic Émile Faguet once ironically remarked. What seems today to be a paradox was a commonplace in France a century ago; on both the left and the right, liberal society was rejected as inadequate or hypocritical, and liberalism was seen as a mere oxymoron or an exotic eccentricity. Fortunately, much had changed in Paris in the last three decades of the twentieth century when liberalism became the new reigning political ideology. Contemporary French liberals draw upon a rich tradition of nineteenth-century French liberal thinking that has been ignored or systematically distorted by unsympathetic commentators.<sup>1</sup> How can one explain, then, this liberal Renaissance?

To be sure, there has always been an enigmatic and mysterious quality to the liberal phenomenon in France that has puzzled English-speaking scholars over the past century. The complex legacy of the French Revolution and its internal contradictions might explain why nineteenth-century French liberals grappled with a particular set of issues and why their solutions were often found to be unorthodox and unconventional when compared to those advanced by English liberals across the Channel. The particular dilemmas faced by French liberals—how to “end” the French Revolution, and how to reconcile order and liberty in a nation torn by a long civil war—challenged them to rethink their views and made them fully aware of the complexity of their social and political world. These issues also instilled in the French a certain sense of moderation and convinced them that the struggle for new liberties and rights involved an endless series of political settlements in which contingency can be as important as human will. Thus, what emerged from the debate over the nature of post-revolutionary French society was an original type of liberal doctrine that is worth exploring as an alternative to the deontological liberalism of contemporary academic circles.

Not surprisingly, of all the political currents in nineteenth-century France, liberalism has been the least understood by Anglo-American scholars. For a long time, French liberalism was equated with Alexis de Tocqueville, whose *Democracy in America* had gained, almost from the moment of its publication in 1835, the status of a masterpiece in political sociology, and was seen as an

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1. For a presentation of the new French liberals, see the anthology *New French Thought*, ed. MATHIEU LILLIAT (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

inexhaustible source of inspiration for students of liberal democracy. More recently, an English translation of Benjamin Constant's political writings<sup>2</sup> has enriched our understanding of French liberalism. Nonetheless, any picture of French liberalism would be incomplete if we continued to ignore a third towering figure in the history of nineteenth-century French political thought, François Guizot, the most famous representative of the *doctrinaires*' group.<sup>3</sup>

François-Pierre-Guillaume Guizot was born in Nîmes on October 4, 1787, to a Protestant family; his Girondist father, like many of his innocent fellow countrymen, was sentenced to death by guillotine during the Terror of 1793–94. After that tragic episode, the entire Guizot family moved to Geneva, where the young François received a solid education in history, literature, philosophy, and classical languages. In 1805, Guizot left for Paris to study law. Stimulated by the rich cultural Parisian life, his many talents flourished early; his first article, published in 1807, marked the debut of a long and prodigious intellectual career that spanned more than six decades. The young Guizot was quick to make a name for himself in Parisian circles. The proof of his success was his appointment as a (tenured) professor of history at the Sorbonne in 1812 at the age of twenty-five, a major achievement even by the standards of that romantic age. It was at the Sorbonne that Guizot met Pierre-Paul Royer-Collard, a well-known professor of philosophy and a prominent member of the *doctrinaires*' group. During the Bourbon Restoration, Royer-Collard became a leading politician and a master of political rhetoric whose parliamentary speeches exerted an important influence on many of his contemporaries, including his

2. Benjamin Constant, *Political Writings*, ed. Biancamaria Fontana (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

3. Initially, the *doctrinaires*' group included François Guizot (1787–1874), Pierre-Paul Royer-Collard (1763–1845), Prosper de Barante (1782–1866), Victor de Broglie (1792–1867), Hercule de Serre (1776–1824), and Camille Jordan (1771–1821). Other important members such as Charles de Rémusat (1797–1875), Jean-Philibert Damiron (1794–1862), Theodore Jouffroy (1796–1842), and Pellegrino Rossi (1787–1848) joined the *doctrinaires*' group later on. The very word *doctrinaire* is a misnomer; it was given to Guizot and his colleagues, not for the alleged rigidity of their doctrine, but for their professorial tone in parliamentary debates. For a presentation of Guizot and the French *doctrinaires*, see C.-H. Pouthas, *Guizot pendant la Restauration* (Paris: Plon, 1923), Luis Diez del Corral, *El liberalismo doctrinario* (Madrid: Instituto de estudios políticos, 1956), Douglas Johnson, *Guizot* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), Pierre Rosanvallon, *Le moment Guizot* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985), and Gabriel de Broglie, *Guizot* (Paris: Perrin, 1990). Also see Larry Siedentop, "Two Liberal Traditions," in *The Idea of Freedom*, ed. Alan Ryan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. 153–74; Siedentop, *Tocqueville* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 20–40; and Siedentop, "Introduction," to Guizot, *History of Civilization in Europe* (London: Penguin, 1997). For a detailed analysis of the *doctrinaires*' political thought, see Aurelian Craiutu, *The Difficult Apprenticeship of Liberty: Reflections on the Political Thought of the French Doctrinaires* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, Lexington Books, forthcoming).

younger disciple, Alexis de Tocqueville, with whom Royer-Collard had an important correspondence.

Guizot's political career started in 1814, when he accepted a position in administration as general secretary of the Interior Ministry. After the fall of Napoleon and the return of Louis XVIII, Guizot held other high positions in the Ministry of Justice and the *Conseil d'État* that gave him unique opportunities to follow and participate in some of the most important political debates of his age. Guizot's first major publication, *On Representative Government* (1816), placed him in the ranks of the supporters of constitutional monarchy and limited government. Between 1817 and 1819, Guizot and the other doctrinaires were instrumental in passing important liberal laws—first and foremost, the law of the press and the electoral law—that consolidated the civil liberties enshrined in the Charter of 1814. It was during that period (July 1817 to December 1818) that Guizot edited an important publication, *Philosophical, Political, and Literary Archives*. In his articles, he commented on the political writings of his contemporaries and developed an original political agenda, which was predicated on the assumption that the task of the new generation was to constitutionalize the liberties of 1789 and build new liberal institutions.

The assassination of the heir to the throne, the Duke of Berry, in February 1820 sent the government veering toward the right; the inauguration of the ultra-conservative Villèle government meant that the “doctrinaire moment” was over. Guizot was dismissed from the *Conseil d'État*, and his lectures on the origins of representative government were canceled. Ousted from the political arena, Guizot did not abandon politics. In spite of a hostile political environment, he managed to publish two important books which consolidated his reputation as an original political thinker: *On the Government of France* (1820) and *On the Means of Government and Opposition in the Current State of France* (1821). During these years, he also worked on a treatise, *Political Philosophy: On Sovereignty*, which he never finished, an important and dense twenty-seven-chapter philosophical text that provides a new theory of representative government based on two key concepts: the sovereignty of reason and political capacity. As always, Guizot's tone was affirmative, never purely negative, constantly searching for reasonable solutions and proposals. His interest in studying the origins of representative government and his admiration for the English constitutional monarchy began during that time. To be sure, Guizot collected a prodigious number of documents regarding the history of France and England. In 1823, he commenced the publication of an impressive thirty-volume series of documents regarding the history of France and sent to press another important book, *Essays on the History of France*. Three years later, Guizot published a history of the English Revolution, preceded by another impressive set of twenty-five volumes of documents regarding the events that led to the fall of Charles I in 1649.

Guizot's fame as a historian reached a peak in 1828, when he was finally allowed to resume his teaching. He gave a series of famous lectures on the history of civilization in Europe and France that drew a large audience of enthusiastic students; Tocqueville attended Guizot's lectures, took extensive notes, and shared his admiration for his professor with Gustave de Beaumont, who would accompany him on his American journey three years later. Guizot's *History of Civilization in Europe* soon became one of the most popular books in nineteenth-century France, a true best-seller that brought him well-deserved fame as a first-rate historian and philosopher of history and civilization. A masterpiece of historical writing, this book—according to one commentator “the most intelligent general history of Europe ever written”<sup>4</sup>—introduced a series of topics, such as the class struggle, the idea of civilization, the role of antagonism in society, and the distinction between social order and political order, several of which were subsequently borrowed by other leading figures, such as Tocqueville, Marx, and John Stuart Mill.

Elected into the Chamber of Deputies in early 1830, Guizot hailed the July Revolution and became one of the leading political figures during the July Monarchy. Under the reign of Louis-Philippe (1830–48), he assumed various ministerial positions and proved to be a master of parliamentary management whose skills were acknowledged by close friends and fierce critics alike. As minister of education from 1832 to 1837, Guizot was the author of the Great Schools Law of June 1833, which created the French national primary-school system. In a letter sent to the teachers, he outlined his political vision: “No sectarian or party spirit in your school. The teacher must rise above the fleeting quarrels which agitate society.”<sup>5</sup> Appointed ambassador to London in early 1840, Guizot was recalled to Paris in October of the same year to help the king form a new government whose mission was to end a long ministerial crisis. It was the beginning of the new Soult-Guizot cabinet,<sup>6</sup> which lasted (with a few changes) until 1848, thus breaking all records for ministerial longevity in France (there had been fifteen governments between 1830 and 1840).

The Revolution of 1848 marked the end of Guizot's political career. After his fall from power in 1848, he went to England, from where he made a last attempt to return to political life a year later. Defeated at the polls, he decided to abandon parliamentary politics after publishing one last political book, *On*

4. Larry Siedentop, “Introduction,” in François Guizot, *The History of Civilization in Europe* (London: Penguin, 1997), p. vii.

5. “Biographical Notice of M. Guizot,” in François Guizot, *The History of Civilization from the Fall of the Empire to the French Revolution*, vol. 1 (London: Bohn, 1894), p. xvii.

6. During that time, Guizot was minister of foreign affairs and chief spokesman of the government in the Chamber of Deputies.

*Democracy in France* (1849). Guizot spent the last quarter of his life meditating on religious issues, being active in Protestant circles, writing history, and finishing his memoirs. In 1851, he sent to press *The History of the Origins of Representative Government in Europe*, which contained the lectures on representative government that he had given in the early 1820s. During the last two decades of his life, Guizot remained an indefatigable writer. He published a historical study of George Washington, reflections on the legacy of the French Revolution, and eight volumes of memoirs, along with religious meditations and writings on the English Revolution. When the venerable doctrinaire passed away in 1874 at the age of eighty-seven, France lost a great liberal and a wise statesman, the last representative of a distinguished nineteenth-century liberal tradition.

A cursory look at the particular political situation during the Bourbon Restoration explains why Guizot decided to write about the origin and principles of representative government. "For the first time after 1792," he once claimed, "the French Revolution and the old French society had met face to face, discussed and combated against each other, in full liberty."<sup>7</sup> Under those circumstances, writing about representative government and defending its principles became a powerful means of advancing a particular (reformist) political agenda. Not surprisingly, during the Bourbon Restoration, historical writing underwent a true Renaissance; from a scholarly pursuit, it turned into a political tool that offered an ideal arena for disguised political battles.<sup>8</sup> Those who cherished the noble ideals of 1789 understood that the best way to promote and legitimize the principles of the French Revolution in the face of an avenging aristocracy and zealous radicals on the left was to delve into the history of France and European civilization in order to demonstrate that both the Revolution and representative government had strong roots in the past and were the inevitable outcomes of a long political and social evolution.

Thus, liberal historians such as Guizot resorted to a more or less selective reading of the past, one that insisted on continuities and long-term patterns. To this end, they pointed out that, in France as well as in Europe, liberty was ancient while despotism was modern. Like many of his contemporaries, Guizot, too, believed that knowledge of the past could and should be harnessed to

7. François Guizot, *Mélanges d'histoire et de politique* (Paris: Ladvocat, 1869), p. xiii.

8. For a comprehensive discussion of this topic, see Stanley Mellon, *The Political Uses of History: A Study of Historians in the French Restoration* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958). Mellon also edited a substantial selection from Guizot—*Historical Essays and Lectures* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972)—that included a few chapters from *The History of the Origins of Representative Government in Europe*.



to fend present political goals and shape the future. He wrote a history of civilization in Europe which openly praised the virtues of English constitutionalism and the tradition of self-government; at the same time, Guizot described the French Revolution as being the climax of the great European revolution of liberty and as having significant antecedents in the history of Europe. The same vision undergirds Guizot's history of the origins of representative government. In this book, he examined the ancient roots of liberty and the legitimacy of representative government by surveying the long evolution of representative institutions in Europe. "That which is now revealed," Guizot wrote, "has been laboring for more than twelve centuries to manifest itself."<sup>9</sup> More important, he argued that both the spirit of the new age and the new social condition demanded representative government. Hence, the task of the historian was to search for the germs of representative institutions, however crude and imperfect they might be; determine what influences have stifled their progress; and follow their development.

Nonetheless, the importance and originality of *The History of the Origins of Representative Government in Europe* cannot be grasped if we refer only to the historical background in which it was written. It is important to note that, while reflecting on the origins of representative government, Guizot introduced a new political vocabulary and a method of inquiry that were part of an original political philosophy. He emphasized the dependence of political institutions on social conditions and argued that, in order to understand the political institutions of a period or a country, it is necessary to explore different social conditions, the state of persons, and the nature of properties.<sup>10</sup> Guizot's political vision was equally bold and original. He was a proponent of the *juste milieu* theory that defended representative government and constitutional monarchy grounded in the notions of political capacity, publicity, and the doctrine of the sovereignty of reason. As to Guizot's *method* of writing history, he sought to understand and explain the real nature and hidden springs of the institutions of representative government. In following this method, Guizot combined a taste for grand narratives with a particular gift for philosophical generalizations and a tendency toward political instruction. He enjoyed advancing broad philo-

9. François Guizot, *History of the Origins of Representative Government in Europe*, p. 221; also see pp. 11–12. All page numbers refer to the present edition.

10. Ibid., pp. 28–29, 90–91. Writes Guizot: "When we are about to speak of the institutions of a country at any given period, we must first understand what was the state of persons in that country at that period. . . . The first question to be solved, then, is that of the state of persons; we must precisely understand which are those classes that really figure in history" (ibid., p. 28). The dependence of political institutions on the social condition is also emphasized in Guizot's *Essays on the History of France* (1823).



sophical views and general ideas on the destiny of the human race; at the same time, his conclusions always retained a strong political import while striving to achieve a sound balance between impartiality and commitment. It is worth noting that his was not a "cold and unprofitable impartiality" which is often the offspring of indifference and lack of vision, but that "energetic and fruitful impartiality which is inspired by the vision and the admiration of truth."<sup>11</sup>

Indeed, a cursory look at the descriptive table of contents of *The History of the Origins of Representative Government in Europe* shows the originality of this unusual book. The *History* combines lengthy narrative chapters full of historical details with theoretical chapters in which Guizot reflects on the principles, goals, and institutions of representative government. The second part of the book analyzes the architecture of the English representative system that was praised and admired by all Restoration liberals from Madame de Staël to Benjamin Constant. Here, Guizot explains the different patterns followed by England and France by tracing the various alliances between the royal power, the nobles, and the commons. Guizot's *History* addresses other equally important topics, such as constitutionalism and limited power, the sovereignty of reason, good government, the relationship between political capacity and political rights, the evolution of Parliament (in England), the prerequisites of a sound electoral system, and the role of religion in the progress of European civilization.

Furthermore, while reflecting on the origin of representative government, Guizot took issue with some of the ideas of his most famous predecessors. He commented on the shortcomings of Montesquieu's theory of the separation of powers, which failed to distinguish between the sovereignty of fact and the sovereignty of right. Guizot also discussed at length Rousseau's most important political ideas, above all his controversial views on political representation and social contract. In a few memorable pages, Guizot refuted the social contract theory and opposed Rousseau's emphasis on individual will by pointing out that the latter could never be the basis of political legitimacy and right.<sup>12</sup> For Guizot, the only legitimate sources of right and sovereignty were reason, truth, and justice, which can be only imperfectly approximated on Earth.

The core of the book is Guizot's analysis of the "true" principles of representative government, which also contains a vigorous defense of political liberty. At the heart of Guizot's theory of representative government are his opposition to arbitrary and absolute power and the idea that no individual (human) will is infallible. It will be recalled that, for Guizot, the debate of the

11. Guizot, *History of the Origins of Representative Government in Europe*, p. 9. Also see pp. 4-6, 222-25.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 47-55.

Restoration was between those who wanted to bring the French Revolution to an end (by constitutionalizing the liberties of 1789 and building a viable representative government) and those who tried to turn back the clock of history or wanted to continue the revolution. Guizot started from the assumption that the doctrine of the sovereignty of reason was the only effective means of preventing tyranny and the usurpation of power by ruthless politicians. In his opinion, the main principle of representative government was precisely the destruction of all sovereignty of permanent right; *de facto* sovereignty is granted only on the condition that it should be continually justified by the conformity of the sovereign's actions to the principles of reason, truth, and justice. On this view, representative government does not recognize the sovereignty of right as an intrinsic attribute of any person or collective body; on the contrary, all powers are expected to strive to discover and fulfill the principles of reason, truth, and justice that ought to govern their actions. In view of the radical imperfection of human nature and because the sovereignty of right belongs only to reason, each appropriation of the sovereignty of fact should be considered temporary and limited.

The *liberal* character of this view must be duly underscored here, since it has often been neglected or even flatly denied. Guizot believed that the goal of the representative system was to provide safeguards against the existence of absolute illegitimate power by making sure that powers would be properly divided and submitted to certain trials, meet with legal obstacles, withstand public opinion, undergo opposition, and be forced to constantly prove their legitimacy in the front of the entire nation.<sup>13</sup> Two fundamental assumptions underlie Guizot's definition of representative government. First, since reason and political capacity are unevenly distributed in any political community, a new doctrine of "true" representation is needed that takes into account and reflects the existence of both civil equality and "legitimate" forms of political inequality. Second, Guizot defined publicity as the cornerstone of representative government and took it to be a new means of government that brings closer together power and society, opinion and government. To be sure, publicity is no substitute for elections, but without publicity there can be no "true" elections. On this view, publicity becomes both the prerequisite of and the necessary outcome of liberty; it has been rendered inevitable by the advent of a new social condition grounded in the equality of conditions.<sup>14</sup>

The originality of Guizot's approach becomes evident once we look at his

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 370-71.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70, 227, 295-97.

definition of political representation and his views on “true” representation.<sup>15</sup> He opposed the (allegedly) flawed theories of representation advanced by his predecessors and contemporaries, making a strong case for reexamining the “true” meaning of political representation. The fundamental principle of the philosophy that Guizot criticized held that every man is his own absolute master and that the only legitimate law for him is his individual will.<sup>16</sup> Opposing Rousseau, Guizot affirmed the existence of a transcendent law that commands universal obedience regardless of man’s explicit consent. From this point of view, political representation can no longer be seen as the delegation of an individual will or as a simple relation based on mandate. It becomes a process in which the elements of reason and knowledge scattered in the bosom of society are collected through elections and publicity, and the most “capable ones” can deliberate on the interests of the nation.<sup>17</sup> Thus, the purpose of representative government is to “constitute the government through the action of society, and society through the action of government.”<sup>18</sup> This theme is closely related to another fundamental concern of Guizot, that is, to multiply the contact points between opinion (society) and power, a task that had been rendered possible for the first time by the institutions of representative government, above all publicity and open parliamentary debates.

To conclude, by reading *The History of the Origins of Representative Government in Europe* we stand to discover a powerful defense of liberty and a first-rate political philosopher who speaks to us in strikingly original language about important issues that continue to concern us. Distinguished politician, historian, political philosopher, ambassador, polemicist, and pillar of faith, Guizot has remained after his death a singular character who cannot be understood in terms of black-and-white categories. While Guizot the historian acquired a worldwide reputation a century and a half ago and his words “*Enrichissez-vous*”<sup>19</sup> made him famous as a defender of the middle class, Guizot the political thinker has been neglected in the English-speaking world. The reissue of *The History of the Origins of Representative Government in Europe* should therefore be

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 285–97.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 287.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 295–97.

18. See Guizot, *Archives Philosophiques, Politiques et Littéraires*, vol. 2 (Paris: Fournier, 1817), p. 114. Although this idea seems to have a strong statist connotation, Guizot’s position does not amount to an uncritical defense of state power. Guizot emphasized the importance of publicity as a new means of government and defended limited government (constitutionalism).

19. These words have often been detached from the larger context to which they belong. This is what Guizot in fact said: “Éclairez-vous, enrichissez-vous, améliorez la condition morale et

seen as an act of justice that is supposed to retrieve from oblivion the writings of a great liberal and statesman who remains one of the last great “virgin forests” in modern political thought.

AURELIAN CRAIUTU

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matérielle de notre France: voilà les vraies innovations.” The phrase is taken from *Le Moniteur*, March 2, 1843. For more detail, see J. Allier, “Esquisse du personnage de Guizot,” in *Actes du colloque François Guizot* (Paris: Société de l’Histoire du Protestantisme Français), pp. 27–45.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

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THIS edition reproduces the original English translation of François Guizot's *History of the Origin of Representative Government in Europe* by Andrew R. Scoble (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1861). Guizot gave these lectures on the history of representative government in Paris in 1820–1822. They were published in French three decades later as *Histoire des origines du gouvernement représentatif en Europe* (Paris, Didier, 1851, 2 vols.). Andrew Scoble's translation is reprinted here without any substantive changes. The only important change is the one operated in the title that was incorrectly printed in the original edition ("History of the Origin of Representative Government in Europe" instead of "History of the Origins of Representative Government in Europe"). In addition to being accurate, Scoble's translation has the unique advantage of being an elegant nineteenth-century English version of a well-written nineteenth-century French text.

As editor, I was responsible for writing the introduction and preparing a set of explanatory notes that shed light on Guizot's theoretical and historical background. The footnotes that appeared in the original English translation are marked with symbols and are reprinted here unchanged. The editor's footnotes (marked with numbers) are the explanatory notes mentioned above, plus translations of the Latin phrases used by Guizot in his text. The translations were made by Christine Clarkson, to whom I would like to extend special thanks. Finally, we have created a new index for this Liberty Fund edition.

Liberty Fund welcomed with enthusiasm my proposal and was extremely supportive of the entire project. Special thanks to the Liberty Fund staff for their dedicated work and genuine commitment to retrieving from oblivion this classic work of Guizot. Liberty Fund also sponsored a colloquium on Guizot's political thought in which we used excerpts of this important book.

We hope that this new edition of Guizot's *History of the Origins of Representative Government in Europe*, that has been out of print for more than a century, will be an opportunity for many readers to rediscover a major thinker and historian whose writings are essential to understanding the evolution of liberal democracy.

## PREFACE

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IN 1820, at the time when the various faculties of the *Académie de Paris* and the *Collège de France* were recommencing their courses of lectures, several persons combined to establish a *Journal des Cours Publiques*, in which they reproduced, from their notes, the lectures which they had attended. The course which I delivered, at this period, on the history of Representative Government, occupies a place in this collection. I did not revise the analyses of my lectures which were published. They were brief and incomplete, and frequently incorrect and confused. I have been requested to authorize a reprint of them. I could not consent to this without bestowing upon these analyses, at the present day, that labour of revision to which they were not subjected at the time of their publication. The two volumes which I now publish are the result of this labour, which has been more protracted, and has involved more considerable alterations than I at first anticipated. In order to accomplish it, I have frequently had recourse to my *Essais sur l'Histoire de France*, in which I embodied, in 1823, some of my researches on the same subject. This course of lectures on the origin of Representative Government is now as exact and complete as if my lectures in 1820–1822 had been collected and revised with the same care as I bestowed, in 1827–1830, on the publication of my courses on the General History of Civilization in Europe, and on the History of Civilization in France.

When, in the year 1820, I devoted my energies to this course of instruction, I was taking leave of public life, after having, during six years, taken an active part in the work of establishing representative government in our own land. The political ideas and friends with whom I had been associated were, at that period, removed from the head of affairs. I connected myself with their reverses, without abandoning our common hopes and efforts. We had faith in our institutions. Whether they entailed upon us good or evil fortune, we were equally devoted to them. I was unwilling to cease to serve their cause. I endeavoured to explain the origin and principles of representative government, as I had attempted to practise it.<sup>1</sup>

How shall I speak, at the present day, of bad fortune and reverse, in reference to 1820? What shall we say of the fate which has recently overtaken our fa-

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1. For more details on the historical and political context of the Bourbon Restoration, see C.-H. Pouthas, *Guizot pendant la Restauration (Guizot During the Restoration)* (Paris: Plon, 1923); Luis Díez del Corral, *El liberalismo doctrinario (The Doctrinaire Liberalism)* (Madrid: Instituto de estudios políticos, 1956); Douglas Johnson, *Guizot* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963); Pierre Rosanvallon, *Le moment Guizot (The Guizot Moment)* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985); Gabriel de Fougère, *Guizot* (Paris: Perrin, 1990).

therland, and of that which is perhaps in store for us? It is a shame to make use of the same words in respect to evils and dangers so prodigiously unequal. In truth, the trials of 1820 were severe and painful, yet the State was not thrown into confusion by them, and they were followed by ten years of regular and free government. In 1830, a still severer trial, the test of a revolution, was applied to our noble institutions, and they did not succumb; they shook off the revolutionary yoke, and gave us eighteen years more of order and liberty. From 1814 to 1848, notwithstanding so many violent convulsions, constitutional monarchy remained standing, and events justified the obstinacy of our hopes. But now the storm has struck every institution, and still threatens to destroy all that survive. Not merely kings and laws, but the very root of government, of all government—what do I say?—the roots of society itself have been reached, and are left bare and almost torn up. Can we again seek safety at the same source? (11) we still believe and hope in representative government and monarchy?

I have not escaped, any more than other persons, from the anxiety occasioned by this doubt. Nevertheless, in proportion as the events which have weighed upon us, for the last three years, have received development and elucidation—when I beheld society pausing, by an effort of its own, on the verge of that abyss to which it had been brought by its own weakness—I felt the revival in my soul of that faith and hope which have filled my life, and which, until these last days, have constituted the faith and hope of our time. Among the infinite illusions of human vanity, we must number those of misfortune; whether as peoples or as individuals, in public or in private life, we delight to persuade ourselves that our trials are unprecedented, and that we have to endure evils and to surmount obstacles previously unheard of. How deceitful is this consolation of pride in suffering! God has made the condition of men, of all men, more severe than they are willing to believe; and he causes them, at all times, to purchase, at a dearer price than they had anticipated, the success of their labours and the progress of their destiny. Let us accept this stern law without a murmur; let us courageously pay the price which God puts upon success, instead of basely renouncing the hope of success itself. The leading idea, the national desire of France, in 1789, was the alliance of free institutions with hereditary monarchy. We have been carried far away from our design; we have immensely deceived ourselves and gone astray in our presumptuous hopes; but we should no less deceive ourselves in our sceptical despondency. God, who permits the burden of their faults to fall upon nations, does not make their own life to be to them a continuous falsehood and a fatal snare; our whole history, our entire civilization, all our glories and our greatness urged and led us onward to the union of monarchy and liberty; we have often taken the wrong road in our way towards our object; and in order to reach it, we shall still have to take many new roads and to pass over many difficult spots. But let our object remain the same; for there lies our haven.



## PREFACE

If I should apply, at the present day, to these historical studies of 1820, all the lessons which political life has given me since that period, I should perhaps modify some of the ideas which I have expressed in reference to some of the conditions and forms of representative government. This system of government has no unique and solely good type, in conformity to which it must necessarily and universally be instituted. Providence, which allots to nations different origins and destinies, also opens to justice and liberty more than one way of entering into governments: and it would be foolishly to reduce their chances of success if we condemned them to appear always with the same lineaments, and to develop themselves by the same means. One thing only is important, and that is, that the essential principles of order and liberty should subsist beneath the different forms which the interference of the country in its own affairs may assume amongst different peoples and at different epochs. These essential and necessary principles of all representative government are precisely those which, in our days, are ignored and outraged. I venture to believe that they will be found faithfully expounded in these lectures; and that on this account, even at the present day, my work will not be devoid either of utility or of interest.

GUIZOT